BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

BCStats

Infoline

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Issue: 08-01

January 4th, 2008

- **Housing starts up 36.2% in November**
- **BC softwood lumber prices continue to fall in November**
- **Canadian manufacturer prices inch down 0.6% in November**

The Economy

- **Housing starts in the province surged (+36.2%, *seasonally adjusted*) in November, more than recovering from a 6.8% decline in October.** New home building activity was down in six provinces with declines ranging from 2.6% in New Brunswick to 25.0% in Nova Scotia. Canadian starts managed to inch up 0.4%, boosted by increases in BC and Ontario (+11.5%). *Data Source: CMHC*

- **Sawmills and planing mills in the province produced 16.0% less lumber this October than in the same month last year.** Mills in the Interior slowed their output by 11.0%, while production at coastal mills was down more substantially (-51.0%). Canadian lumber production slipped 10.9%, due to significant downturns in most of the nation's lumber producing provinces. Year-to-date, BC sawmills have accounted for over half of the lumber production in Canada. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

Agriculture

- **The price BC farmers received for their agricultural commodities decreased (-2.6%) in October from the same month a year earlier.** The Farm Product Price Index (FPPI) slipped to 105.0 (1997=100), hitting its lowest point since December of 2006. Substantial declines in the prices of livestock and animal products (-5.6%) counterbalanced a slight gain in crop prices (+0.8%), resulting in October's overall drop. BC's situation was similar to the national picture in that livestock and animal commodity prices fell (-4.6%), while crop prices climbed (+16.5%). However, the strength of the crop index more than offset weakness in livestock and animal products prices, such that overall, Canada's FPPI rose 5.1% in October.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

Lottery and Gambling

- **In the 2006/2007 fiscal year, there were approximately 4,300 lottery retailers in the province.** British Columbians claimed $544 million in lottery prizes including eight wins of $2 million or more. There were 16 casinos in BC, housing more than 7,900 slot machines. The British Columbia Lottery Corporation employed the equivalent of 596 full-time employees over the last fiscal year and took in total revenues of over $2.4 billion. The largest single jackpot won in BC in 2006/2007 was $12.4 million. By comparison, the largest lottery prize in Canadian history is $54.3 million, awarded in a 2005 draw. *Data Source: British Columbia Lottery Corporation*

Causes of Death

- **Cancer (28%), heart disease (22%), and cerebrovascular (7%) diseases were the leading causes of death in 2005.** Other diseases that took a high toll included respiratory diseases (4%) pneumonia/influenza (4%) and diabetes (3%). Of the 30,033 deaths in BC in 2005, 6% (1,878) were related to the use of alcohol, either as a contributing factor in an accidental death, or as a cause of illness.

- **Accidents and violence claimed 1,654 lives in BC in 2005, with men (1,105) being twice as likely as women (549) to die a violent death.** One in twenty deaths in BC last year were the result of accidents or violence. Suicide (403), motor vehicle accidents (369) and accidental falls (339) were the leading causes of death, accounting for over two-thirds of the total. Another 243 people were accidentally poisoned, 29 drowned, and 31 were murdered. Transportation accidents (25), fires (22) and accidents caused by machinery (10) were other common causes of accidental death. The leading cause of death for men was suicide (302), while women

Did you know...
Most (77%) British Columbians say that 2007 was a 'good year' when compared to other years, while even more (91%) are optimistic about 2008. *Source: Ipsos Canada*

were more likely to succumb as a result of accidental falls (166). Motor vehicle accidents were the second most common cause of death for both men (244) and women (125).

Data Source: BC Vital Statistics Agency

- Between 1990 and 2005, HIV took the lives of 2,842 people in British Columbia, most (1,899) of them males between the ages of 30 and 49. During this fifteen-year period, 91% (2,578) of the people who died from HIV disease were male. The largest number (25) of female deaths from HIV over this period occurred in 2005. In that same year, there were 145 deaths attributed to HIV, up from 105 in 2004, but down substantially from the highs recorded in the mid 1990s. The number of HIV related deaths peaked at 331 in 1994, and then dropped significantly in the late 1990s. The death toll has remained between 100 and 145 per year since 1997. *Data Source: BC Vital Statistics Agency*

Air Traffic

- **Vancouver International Airport remained the second-busiest airport in the country, after Toronto's Pearson Airport, in November.** There were 25,089 aircraft that took off or landed in Vancouver, compared to 33,719 in Toronto. The third-busiest airport was Calgary International, with 20,346 aircraft arrivals and departures. International airports in Montreal (17,730) and Ottawa (14,806) were not quite as busy. The international airport in BC's capital city ranked twelfth-busiest, with 11,936 aircraft movements in August. *Data Source: Transport Canada*

The Nation

- **Canadian manufacturers' prices were 0.6% lower in November 2007 than in the same month of 2006.** Primary metal products continued to have a strong influence on the 12-month change, dropping 8.6% from November of 2006, slightly exceeding October's decrease of 8.1%. Falling motor vehicle prices (-9.0%) also contributed significantly to the overall decline in manufacturers' prices, marking their eight consecutive year-over-year decrease. However, such declines were heavily tempered by rising prices for other major commodity groups, most notably petroleum & coal products (+26.3%). Had petroleum & coal been excluded, the Industrial Product Price Index (IPPI) would have fallen 3.2% instead of just 0.6%.

Prices for raw materials jumped 15.7% in November compared to the same month of 2006, driven mainly by a 33.4% climb in the price of mineral fuels. Without mineral fuels, the Raw Materials Price Index (RMPI) would have increased 0.7%. Falling prices of non-ferrous metals (-4.5%) and animal products (-2.1%) were slight cooling factors in the year-over-year increase in the RMPI.

BC softwood lumber prices continued to drop (-8.0%) as producers of Interior (-14.6%) lumber received substantially less for their products than in November 2006, more than offsetting higher prices for Coastal lumber (+8.5%).

The appreciation of the Canadian dollar muted the increase in producer prices. Excluding the impact of the exchange rate, producer prices would have risen 3.6% instead of falling 0.6%.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

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For data originating from Statistics Canada, data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the catalogue number.

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Originally published in
Tourism Sector Monitor Issue 07-11

The Nechako Region

The Nechako region covers an area of approximately 190,000 square kilometres and extends from the Nechako valley in the south to the Yukon border to the north. Nechako is comprised of two sub-regions: the Stikine Region and the Bulkley-Nechako Regional District. A large portion of this region is sparsely populated, with most of the population residing in Bulkley-Nechako.

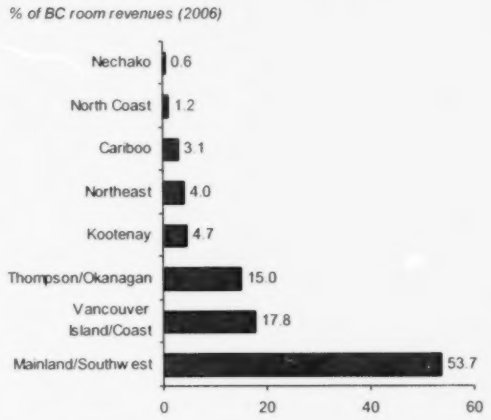
Nechako Development Region

The region is home to several provincial parks, including Francois Lake and Takla Lake, and is a popular destination for camping, fishing and boating. Urban centres that are the core of tourism activities in the region include Smithers and Vanderhoof.

Nechako is a relatively small player in BC's tourism sector

Nechako accounted for the smallest share of total room revenues (0.6%) in 2006, below that of other northern regions including North Coast (1.2%) and Northeast (4.0%). As a result, movements in Nechako revenues do not generally reflect the overall provincial trend.

Nechako accounted for the smallest share of provincial room revenues in 2006



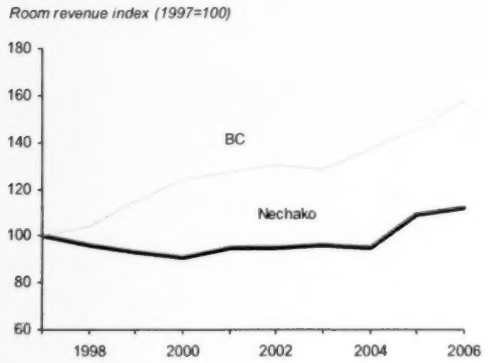
Source: BC Stats

In 2006, Nechako had the fewest number of accommodation properties (73) and rooms (1,365) in the province, comprising 3% and 1% of the BC total respectively. Close to four in ten (38%) properties were motels. As the Nechako region is a popular destination for fishing, close to one-third (30%) of accommodations are fishing lodges.

The region tends to underperform BC in terms of room revenue growth, but has outpaced the province in recent years

From 1997 to 2006, annual room revenues in Nechako increased from approximately $9.3 million to $10.4 million (+11.8%), well below the provincial average (+57.4%). Returns at motels (+14.9%), which account for most of the region's room revenues, were also lower than the BC average (+39.8%).

Nechako room revenue growth is typically below the provincial average

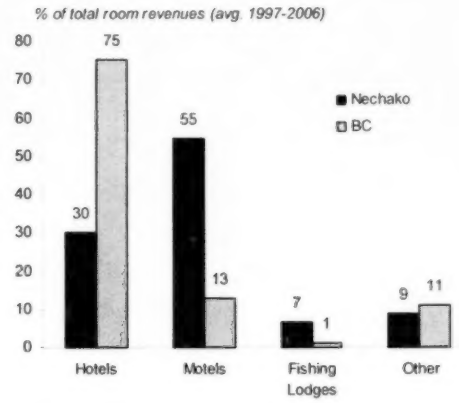


Source: BC Stats

Nechako has been growing at below-average rates during much of the 1990s, but has picked up speed in recent years. During 2004 to 2006, the region (+18.1%) outpaced the province (+14.4%). Unadjusted room revenue estimates for the first eight months of 2007 indicate that growth in Nechako (+16.1% compared to the same period in 2006) continues to exceed the provincial rate (+8.1%), driven mainly by significant revenue gains in Smithers (+28.4%).

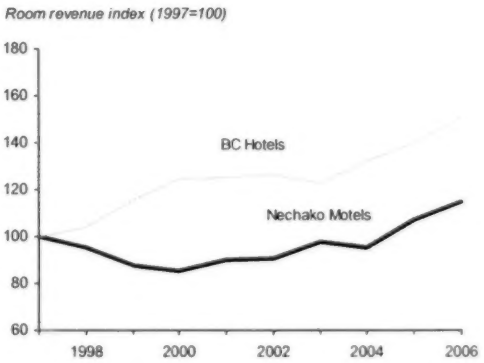
Lower long-term growth in Nechako can be partially explained by the revenue distribution across accommodation types. In BC, hotels accounted for 75% of the provincial total and were the main driver of growth (+51.4%) during the 1997 to 2006 period. In Nechako, a significant proportion of room revenues are from motels (55%), which have been growing at a slower rate (+14.9%). Although fishing lodges showed considerable growth (+73.4%), they account for only 7% of the regional total. Nechako does not have a large enough tourism market to justify investments in hotel properties, as the proportion of revenues generated by hotels (30%) is significantly lower than the provincial average. In addition, returns at hotels declined (-8.3%) from 1997 to 2006.

Motels generate more than one-half of total room revenues in Nechako...



Source: BC Stats

...but have grown slower than BC's hotels



Source: BC Stats

On a month-over-month basis, room revenue growth in Nechako shows considerable volatility. However, seasonally adjusted room revenues have been trending upwards since the trough recorded in March 2004. The sharp increase recorded in February 2005 was largely due to filming activities in Smithers, which accounts for approximately 50% of Nechako's revenues.

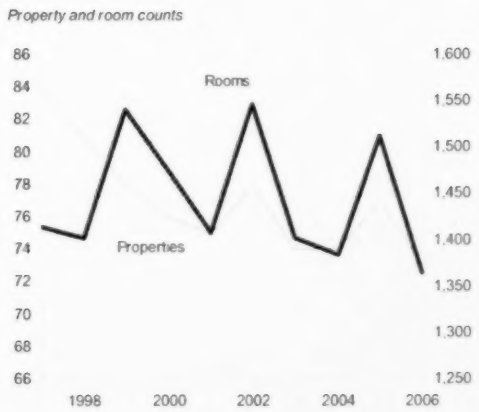
Nechako room revenues have been trending up since the second quarter of 2004

Source: BC Stats

Nechako property and room counts have declined

Although Smithers recorded an increase (+22.2%) in accommodation properties from 1997 to 2006, the number of properties in the Nechako region fell (-13.1%). Property counts in the province, on the other hand, moved up 13.1%. In addition, neighbouring regions including North Coast (+6.5%) and Northeast (+6.3%) experienced growth in accommodations.

The number of properties in Nechako has trended downward since 1997 while room counts tend to fluctuate



Source: BC Stats

The number of rooms in the region also decreased (-3.5%) from 1997 (1,415) to 2006 (1,365), but this was not the case in the province as a whole (+25.4%). However, room counts increased 15.5% in Smithers, which accounted for more than one-third (37%) of all rooms in the region in 2006.

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Email transmission information service from BC Stats

also on the **Internet** at www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Oct 1/07	% change on one year ago
BC	4,402.9	1.5
Canada	33,091.2	1.0
GDP and INCOME (Revised Nov 8)		
(BC - at market prices)	2006	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	180,328	6.4
GDP *($ 2002 millions)*	158,335	3.3
GDP *($ 2002 per Capita)*	36,649	1.9
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1997 per Capita)*	23,996	5.0
TRADE ($ millions, seasonally adjusted)		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Oct	3,589	1.9
Merchandise Exports - Oct	2,404	-0.5
Retail Sales - Oct	4,745	0.2
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX	% change on one year ago	12-month avg % change
(all items - Nov 2007)		
BC	1.3	1.8
Vancouver	1.4	2.2
Victoria	0.6	1.2
Canada	2.5	2.1
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Nov '07	prev. month
Labour Force - BC	2,399	0.9
Employed - BC	2,298	1.1
Unemployed - BC	100	-3.3
		Oct '07
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	4.2	4.4
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	5.9	5.8
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Jan 2/08	Jan 3/07
Prime Business Rate	6.00	6.00
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	7.35	6.30
- 5 year	7.54	6.45
US-CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Jan 2/08	Jan 3/07
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $ per US $	0.9927	1.1699
(closing rate) US $ per Cdn $	1.0073	0.8530
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Nov '07	one year ago
BC	753.78	1.9
Canada	764.36	4.1

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca

Topic Tables – 2006 Census NEW

What are the top languages spoken at home in your community? Where were a community's immigrants born? A different approach to census tabulations.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen06/topics/topics.asp

2007 Municipal Populations

Total population for municipalities and Regional Districts for July 1, 2007, as well as revised figures for 2002 to 2006, are now online.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/pop/estspop.asp

Area Profiles NEW

There is a new link in the **RESOURCES** tab found at the bottom of our left sidebar. This page acts as a gateway to all our area profile products. Each profile paints a statistical picture of an area using maps, charts, tables, rankings, comparisons, and more. More than eight thousand individual files are available now. Check it out!

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/dd/profiles.asp

2006 Census Profiles

We have profiles for approximately 1,700 different places. New for this cycle is the addition of a comparison area to help you identify which characteristics set a particular place apart from the 'norm'. Since we offer a choice between two comparison areas for each location, there are 3,400 profiles in all..

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen06/profiles/detailed/choose.asp

Released this week by BC Stats

- No subscription releases
- **Next week**
- Environmental Statistics, Occasional
- Labour Force Statistics, December 2007
- Earnings & Employment Trends, Dec. 2007

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